



## TASK FORCE REPORT

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**Date** April 12, 2021

**To** Chair and Members  
Mohawk Lake District Plan Working Group

**From** Heidi de Vries, General Manager People, Legislated Services & Planning

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### 1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item ☐

Item For Consideration ☒

### 2.0 Topic Mohawk Lake District – Real Estate Strategy

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### 3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT the Manager of Real Estate BE DELEGATED authority to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between The Corporation of the City of Brantford and Lansdowne Children's Centre, and a Memorandum of Understanding between The Corporation of the City of Brantford and the De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre, for the purposes of working towards Agreements of Purchase and Sale to effect the disposition of land within the Mohawk Lake District to each of the aforementioned organizations, which Agreements of Purchase and Sale shall be subject to Council approval and shall contains such terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the City Solicitor or designate; and
- B. THAT Staff BE DIRECTED initiate survey work of the approximately 9.7 acre parcel identified in the Mohawk Lake District Plan as Institutional, to delineate and prepare two parcels of land for disposition to the community groups identified in recommendation A, above; and
- C. THAT Staff BE DIRECTED to commence an Expression of Interest process for the lands identified in the Mohawk Lake District Plan as multi-

storey, mixed use Commercial/Residential, consisting of approximately 9.2 acres; and

- D. THAT an Evaluation Committee BE ESTABLISHED for the purposes of evaluating responses to the Mohawk Lake District EOI identified in recommendation C, above, consisting of the Mayor, both Ward 5 Councillors, the Chief Administrative Office, the General Manager of Public Works, and the General Manager of People, Legislated Services and Planning, with support from the Planning Department, Purchasing Division, and the Legal and Real Estate Services Department, and;
- E. THAT the lands identified within the Mohawk Lake District Plan as Transitional/Institutional use BE RESERVED for the future development or expansion of a museum district or as part of the community park to be developed on the adjacent lands.

## **4.0 Executive Summary**

Staff have concluded negotiations/conversations with all community groups who participated in the Expression of Interest Process for the Mohawk Lake District. Of the original nine submission, only two community groups are prepared to move forward with their requests for land within the District. Staff also recommend that a portion of the lands be developed through an Expression of Interest process, to ensure the development of the mixed-use commercial/residential lands honors the spirit and intent of the Mohawk Lake District plan. The remaining lands within the Mohawk Lake District provide the best opportunities for community uses to be fully explored, including the development of a museum district and the creation of a gateway feature and a large park and event space.

## **5.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Mohawk Lake District Plan Working Group for a final real estate strategy for the City-owned lands within the District.

## **6.0 Background**

### **6.1 Working Group Decisions – Expression of Interest**

In 2018, the Mohawk Lake District Plan Working Group (the “Working Group”) issued a request for Expressions of Interest in order to identify potential land

uses for community groups as part of the compatibility analysis being undertaken through the Mohawk Lake District Plan.

The mandate of the Working Group includes the review of requests from community groups interested in re-locating to the Mohawk Lake District and reporting back to Council as to how to address these requests.

In response to its request for Expressions of Interest, the Working Group received nine responses from the following community groups:

1. De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre
2. Lansdown Children Centre
3. Children's Safety Village
4. Participation Support Services
5. Brantford Symphony Orchestra
6. Brantford Theatre Workshops
7. Brant Historical Society
8. Personal Computer Museum
9. Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre ("CIHC")

At its meeting of June 18, 2018, the Working Group evaluated the nine submissions mentioned above. Since that time, the Personal Computer Museum's and the Brant Historical Society requests has been withdrawn, and the Brantford Theatre Workshops have indicated that they are interested in working with the CIHC on a potential collaboration on the CIHC lands.

## **6.2 Engagement with Remaining Community Groups**

Of the nine original submissions, City Staff from the Legal & Real Estate Services Department met with and conducted interviews with the remaining six of the nine organizations that the City had received submissions from for interest in land in the Mohawk Lake District.

On December 14, 2020, City Council approved a ten year lease agreement for the lease of land municipally known as 66 Mohawk Street with the CIHC. The

request of the CIHC has therefore been removed from the list of requests requiring analysis by the Working Group.

The chart shown below provides details of dates and discussions with each of the organizations who submitted Expressions of Interest for these lands.

Submissions for Expression of Interest					
	Organization	Area Needed	Requesting land for a purpose-built facility	Date of Meeting with City Staff	Resolution from discussion
1.	De dqa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre	45,720 sq. ft.	Yes, 5 acres	Nov 17, 2020	Proceeding with next phase for consideration of locating at Mohawk Lake District.
2.	Lansdowne Children's Centre	95,500 sq. ft.	Yes, 7.2 acres	Nov 13, 2020	Proceeding with next phase for consideration of locating at Mohawk Lake District.
3.	Children Safety Village	N/A	Yes, 2.5 acres	Dec 1, 2020	The CSV have been notified by their landlord that will have the option to extend the lease at the current location. CSV feels that the close proximity to the Police Headquarters provides excellent synergy.
4.	Participation Support Services	7,000 sq. ft.	Yes, not yet determined	Nov 12, 2020	Participation Support Services is not in a short term planning position (2-3 years) to move forward with the redevelopment of its 10 Bell Lane site.
5.	Brant Theatre Workshops	3,000 sq. ft.	No,	Nov 13, 2020	The City was advised that the Brant Theatre Workshop will be working on a partnership with CIHC
6.	Brantford Symphony Orchestra	14,000 sq. ft.	No	Nov 19, 2020	The BSO is requiring program space with an existing facility and has no plans to construct new

					space and, therefore, will not be proceeding. City staff have connected the BSO with Laurier University to explore use of vacant space at Market Square.
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At the conclusion of the interviews conducted by Staff from Legal & Real Estate Services, two (2) organizations, Lansdowne Children's Centre ("Lansdowne") and the De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre (Aboriginal Health) remained in the process to acquire lands within the Mohawk Lake District.

Lansdowne and Aboriginal Health have coordinated efforts and have engaged an architect to assist with the overall site design for both facilities. The hope is to capture synergies and facilitate a better functional design for both organizations and to maximize efficiencies.

### **6.3 Community and Public Engagement**

In order to provide the public with an opportunity to view and learn about both proposals from Lansdowne and Aboriginal Health, the City conducted a multi-media campaign and held a virtual open house meeting.

#### **6.3.1 Let's Talk Brantford**

The City offered residents several ways to learn and discover more information about these options and invited them to ask questions and provide feedback on the Let's Talk Brantford site. A project report of the "Let's Talk Mohawk Lake District" can be found on Appendix "A" attached to this report.

#### **6.3.2 Virtual Open House**

City staff and volunteers delivered information flyers (attached as Appendix "B") to approximately 1600 locations within Eagle Place and surrounding area. Staff would like to especially recognize the contributions of Mandy Samwell, Wayne Mercier, Chris Whitehead, Deana Solomon and family, and Councilors VanTilborg and Wall for helping the City spread the word about the virtual open house. Staff could not have reached the community without the support and work of these community leaders.

On March 25, 2021, two virtual open house events were aired on YouTube and hosted by Tara Tran, Senior Planner, and Ron Gasparetto, Manager of Real Estate Services. In order to accommodate availability for the public to virtually attend the meetings, two sessions were held: the first session was held from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and, the second session was held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Both Lansdowne and Aboriginal Health prepared videos and presentations regarding their respective organizations, client services and proposed conceptual development designs and uses. The public was then given the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments on the presentations. Ron Gasparetto, Manager of Real Estate Services for the City also provided a presentation on the potential disposition/retention strategy for the remaining lands within the District.

### **6.3.3 Private Citizen Proposals**

As part of the “Let’s Talk Mohawk Lake District” campaign, members of the public were encouraged to reach out to City staff with questions or comments on the proposed disposition strategy. During this process, the City received correspondence and a proposal from Robert Burtch (attached hereto as Appendix “C”). Mr. Burtch did not participate in the 2018 Expression of Interest process and, therefore, his proposal has not been presented to the Working Group before or fully vetted by staff, nor has he been interviewed as part of this disposition strategy. Staff’s mandate from the Working Group included working with those community groups who participated in the Expression of Interest process already established for these lands.

Staff have included Mr. Burtch’s proposal in this report to the Working Group for information purposes, and do not recommend that the Working Group adopt his proposal. Insufficient details with respect to the proposal were provided to staff to make an informed recommendation to the Working Group. Additionally, Mr. Burtch is a private individual and not a community group and, therefore, he does not fall within the category of persons who staff were authorized to entertain proposals from. Mr. Burtch may choose to submit a proposal through the Expression of Interest as recommended below for a portion of these lands, if that process is adopted by the Working Group and Council.

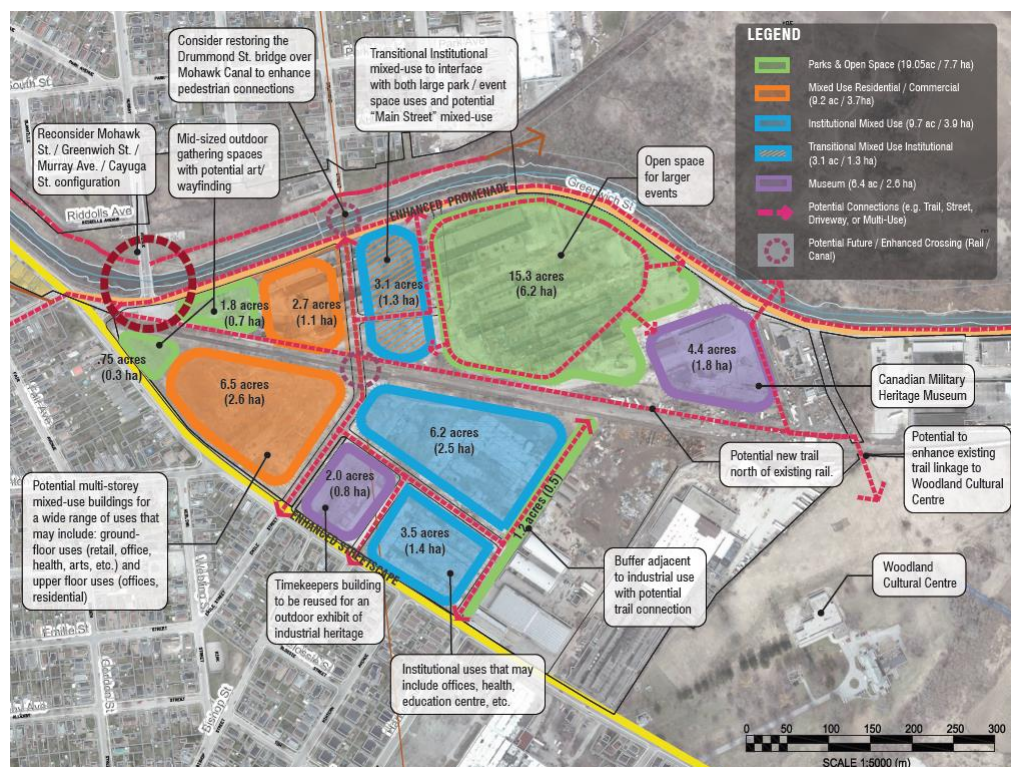
## 7.0 Input from Other Sources

Input into this report was received by the Planning Department, and information relating to Lansdowne and Aboriginal Health was drawn from their respective proposals and websites.

## 8.0 Analysis

### 8.1 Breakdown of City-owned Lands

The following map shows a very general breakdown of the lands located within the Mohawk Lake District that form the subject of this report. The areas and proposed land uses were established through extensive public consultation by the Planning Department. This general plan was adopted by Council and formed the basis of all discussions between staff and the community groups who participated in the Expression of Interest process. The potential land use designations also informed the disposition strategy and recommendations contained here.



The areas of land set out in the attached plan and further described below represent approximated land areas only (not taking into consideration setbacks and the retention of property for municipal infrastructure). The areas denoted on

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the plan above were established pursuant to the Mohawk Lake District planning process. Additionally, all of the lands, with the exception of the two parcels for museum uses, will require official plan designations and rezoning applications.

## **8.2 Institutional Lands – Approximately 9.7 Acres**

The lands highlighted in blue (with no hatching) on the plan above were recommended to be set aside for Institutional uses. This may include offices, health, education center, etc. Staff recommend that these lands be severed into two parcels – one to be conveyed to Aboriginal Health and one to be conveyed to Lansdowne as the two remaining community groups who applied through the Expression of Interest Process. Further details with respect to each of these groups and their intended use of these lands is set out below.

### **8.2.1 De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre Approx. 3 - 5 Acres**

The De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health is 1 of 10 aboriginal health access centres to provide care and community support programs to the Indigenous population living in the urban centres of Hamilton and Brantford. Aboriginal Health provides programs for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. They provide a blend of western and traditional medicine to support the urban Indigenous population, to connect Indigenous communities and local neighborhoods to support health and well-being.

In 2014, the Board of Directors initiated a capital plan for a new site in Brantford. Capital projects were launched on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in Brantford. They met with the community members for input, identifying a variety of programs focusing on the health of the community. Aboriginal Health provides family medicine primary care, healthy living, mental health and addictions, cultural wellness and outreach programs for the Indigenous community of Brantford.

Aboriginal Health formally expressed an interest in the Mohawk Lake District site in 2015. In 2018, the Board of Directors made a submission within the Mohawk Lake District Expression of Interest process. Their proposal includes an Indigenous well-being centre. This centre proposes to not only meet the Indigenous need but local neighborhood need as well. Potential partnerships include 20-40 Indigenous housing mixed residential units, Indigenous community programs, youth education and employment opportunities. A partner in this project is the Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg, which is a non-profit organization serving Hamilton and Brantford and providing a prenatal nutrition program, community



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action program for children, and licensed child care. Aboriginal Health is hopeful that this new location may provide licensed child care.

The conceptual design includes space for health care, child care, housing and mixed commercial space. The centre is proposed to be 97,000 square feet, 4 stories in building height and to be used for Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers for improving health and well-being for people living in the Brantford communities.

### **8.2.2 Lansdown Children's Centre – Approx. 6.2 Acres**

The Lansdowne Children's Centre provides services for children and youth with special needs. The Centre offers rehab, respite and recreation for children with physical, communication or developmental disabilities, focusing on functional needs with the ability for families to self-refer and to be able to receive services in a timely fashion.

The Centre uses 4 sites to provide services to a catchment area that includes Brantford-Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The Lansdowne Children's Centre annually serves over 3,000 children with 250 staff. Onsite, there are approximately 120 staff, including medical students and a number of others in training. The current 2.3 acre location is landlocked, and has only 77 parking spots, whereas the current need for parking is approximately 170 spots. There is no growth opportunity at the existing location, which causes delays in services for over 2,000 children who are on the waiting list. The Lansdowne Children's Centre is looking to upgrade to modern standards around rehab, respite, and recreation, and is in need of four times the space of their current location.

66 Mohawk Street, within Mohawk Lake District, is a central location that is accessible, served by public transit and is large enough for growth. Project Engineers and Architects have reviewed environmental and impact studies provided by City and have designed a slab construction building with no basement, and have considered appropriate building materials and designs to meet the necessary Record of Site Condition and Certificate of Property Use requirements. It is noted that the City remediated the property to the residential level, which would address the Lansdowne Children's Centre's need to ensure it's a safe space for the families they support. The site is close to families they serve in the downtown, East Ward and Eagle Place area and is slightly closer to Ohsweken, St. George, and Paris. The proposed 40,000 square ft. footprint will consolidate other leased premises used by the Centre. Amenities for the

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community with bookable space outside of services hours include a pool, gym and meeting space.

### **8.2.3 Next Steps – Community Groups**

#### **8.2.3.1 Memorandum of Understanding**

In order to assist both Lansdowne and Aboriginal Health in securing funding for their respective builds, City Staff are recommending that a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) be executed with each group. An MOU is an agreement between two or more parties outlined in a formal document. It is not legally binding, but signals the willingness of the parties to move forward with a contract.

The MOU can be viewed as a starting point for negotiations as it defines the scope and purpose of the talks and communicates the mutually accepted expectations of the participating parties.

#### **8.2.3.2 Survey**

Survey work will be required to establish future potential property lines which will delineate each parcel from the existing larger 9.7 acre parcel. The City Surveyor will oversee this work with either internal or external resources depending on availability.

### **8.3 Commercial/Residential Lands – Approximately 9.2 Acres**

The Mohawk Lake District Plan shows approximately 9.2 acres of land to be set aside for mixed-use commercial residential purposes. It is anticipated that a development on these lands could include multi-storey, mixed-use buildings for a wide range of uses such as ground floor retail, office, health clinics, etc. and upper floor uses such as residential or office space. Staff believe that these lands provide an excellent opportunity for the City to generate revenue that could ultimately fund future projects in the Mohawk Lake District, including the development of a promenade, the remediation of the canal, and the development of a large park and event space.

Staff have some reservations with simply placing these lands on the open market and, therefore, are recommending that the Working Group provide direction to develop a public Expression of Interest to solicit development ideas for these lands.

The goal of any disposition of City-owned lands within the Mohawk Lake District should be to attract development opportunities that will bring the vision of the Mohawk Lake District to fruition: being the development of a vibrant community in

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which to live, work and play and enhancing the unique community in which this District is located.

It is vital to this goal to ensure that any disposition of land remains true to the vision of the District. Therefore, staff recommends that an Expression of Interest be conducted for the 9.2 acre parcel for the following reasons:

1. Ability to make the best use of the site in terms of diversity of use and intensification.
2. Advance the Mohawk Lake District Plan goals and objectives.
3. Contribute to the creation of a mixed-use area that is seamlessly integrated in the surrounding community.

Through this process, the City will be able to identify a proponent with whom the City can negotiate and formalize a contract that will meet the City's objectives for these lands.

The Expression of Interest process would be similar to the one utilized for the Colborne Point Lands and would include an evaluation committee consisting of the Mayor, the Ward Councillors, and certain members of staff who have expertise in land transactions and development. The community and the City worked hard to develop a vision for the Mohawk Lake District and staff are of the opinion that the Expression of Interest process would be the best process to ensure that the vision for the development of these lands is honoured. If direction is provided by the Working Group, and adopted by Council, staff would work to prepare the Expression of Interest in time for a June go live date.

#### **8.4 Gateway Lands – 2.55 Acres & Open Space – 15.3 Acres**

The lands shown in green on the map above were envisioned as two different community spaces. The first two, smaller, triangular shaped parcels comprise approximately 2.55 acres of land. Staff recommend that these parcels be set aside as public lands containing either a small park or public art (or both) which will serve as a gateway for the Mohawk Lake District. Staff also recommend that the development of these lands on behalf of the City be included in the Expression of Interest for the Commercial/Residential lands noted above.

Developers could include their ideas of how these lands could be developed as a gateway and the evaluation team would review those proposals and determine which would best serve the District. Consultation with the community could take place as part of that process.

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The largest parcel in the plan above consists of 15.3 acres of land that staff recommend be set aside for a future park and event space. These lands represent an opportunity to reclaim the Greenwich/Mohawk site for community purposes, while also providing space for each of the other, potential, developments on these lands (commercial/residential developments, museums, institutional uses) to benefit from the beautification of these lands and the creation of a large section of parkland within the district. The greening of these lands and the planting of new trees will also contribute to improving the environmental impact of these lands and will contribute to the City's climate change initiative.

### **8.5 Transitional Lands – Approximately 3.1 Acres**

Transitional Institutional/mixed-use lands shown on the plan above in purple hatching were originally envisioned to be used for a development that would complement the proposed, adjacent parkland in order to create a pleasing interface between both the large park/event space use on one side and the potential "Main Street" mixed-use property on the other side. At this time, staff recommend that these lands be retained by the City to secure this property for future opportunities that may develop among community groups who may not have been prepared to advance their capital projects at this time, or for a potential consolidated museum location which would complement both the CIHC and the Canadian Military Heritage Museum located on the other side of the proposed park/event space. The creation of a museum district of sorts, with other uses interspersed throughout the Mohawk Lake District, would be facilitated by the development of these lands by a museum or similar institution.

### **8.6 Summary of Recommended Real Estate Strategy**

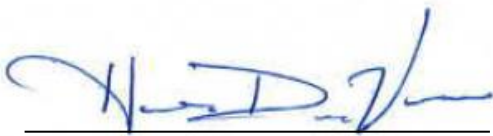
Below is a summary of staff's recommendation with respect to the use of these lands:

- 2.55 acres of "Gateway Lands" – City to retain these lands for use as mid-sized outdoor gathering spaces with potential art/wayfinding.
- 9.2 acres of Commercial/Residential – Expression of Interest to be developed for potential multi storey mixed-use buildings for a wide range of uses that may include.
- 3.1 acres of Transitional Institutional – City to retain for future opportunities that may develop.
- 9.7 acres of Institutional – Convey to Lansdowne and Aboriginal Health

- 15.3 acres of Open Space – City to retain and develop as parkland and potential space for larger events.

## 6.0 Conclusion

The City has concluded its Expression of Interest process for the Mohawk Lake District Lands, which has resulted in identifying two organizations that have displayed both the desire and the capacity to successfully locate within the Mohawk Lake District. In order to move forward, an MOU is required which will provide a basis for negotiations for the land acquisitions. Furthermore, it is staff's recommendation that an EOI be pursued to engage interest in lands identified for a mix of residential and commercial uses that will generate funding for future improvements to the Mohawk Lake District. Finally, staff recommend that the remaining parcels of land within the Mohawk Lake District remain in City hands for the time-being to be developed as a park, gateway feature and potentially used for museum uses in the future, if a willing partner or developer comes forward.



Heidi de Vries  
GM, People, Legislated Services &  
Planning

### Attachments:

Appendix A – Lets Talk Mohawk Lake Project Report

Appendix B – Mohawk Lake District Flyer

Appendix C – Proposal from Robert Burtch